

## Message Text

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71

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SSC-01 CU-04 OPR-02 SY-04 SCCT-02 AID-20

DRC-01 /166 W

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P R 181915Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7582

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY 0235

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 1143

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, NG

SUBJECT: MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN NIGER

REF: NIAMEY 1126(NOTAL) AND NIAMEY 1115; STATE 78187(NOTAL)

FOLLOWING IS PARTIAL RESPONSE TO DEPTTEL 78187

1. GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN TO FUNCTION AGAIN AS OFFICERS TAKE  
CHARGE OF THEIR MINISTRIES. SOME CHIEFS OF MISSION HAVE  
ALREADY CALLED ON LT. COL. SEYNI AND MEMBERS OF SUPREME  
MILITARY COUNCIL. IT SEEMS THAT MINISTERS AT THIS STAGE  
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NOT ONLY HAVE AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS BUT APPEAR

WILLING TO DO SO.

2. INITIAL OPINION IN NIAMEY OF NEW GOVERNMENT IS THAT IT IS BASICALLY MODERATE, ALMOST CONSERVATIVE. GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE FOCUSING ITS ATTENTION ON DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND FOR TIME BEING WILL CONTINUE FOREIGN POLICY SET BY DIORI. PREVAILING MOOD AMONG NIGERIENS IN NIAMEY SEEMS TO BE THAT OVERALL SITUATION IN COUNTRY WILL IMPROVE FOR THEM UNDER NEW GOVERNMENT. CONTRARY VIEWS HOWEVER ARE HELD BY FOREIGN AFRICAN COMMUNITY WHO FEAR THAT MILITARY WILL ADOPT MORE NATIONALISTIC POLICIES REGARDING JOB PERMITS, TAXES, LICENSES, ETC. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL MATCH THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENTS AND RADICAL GROUPS AND SOONER OR LATER DISENCHANTMENT WILL SET IN.

3. LOCAL FRENCH REACTION TO COUP HAS BEEN ONE OF SURPRISE AND SHOCK. DESPITE DIORI'S OCCASIONAL DISAGREEMENT WITH FRENCH AND HIS ATTEMPTS TO DILUTE THEIR OVERWHELMING ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL PRESENCE, HE WAS A FRIEND AND ALL OF FRANCE. OVER PAST YEAR AND HALF, RELATIONS BETWEEN DIORI AND FRANCE WERE DEFINITELY ON UPSWING AFTER SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF ROSTAIN AFFAIR AND SUBSEQUENT AMELIORATION OF PROBLEMS REGARDING AID, DEBTS, URANIUM AND ACCORDS. IN GENERAL FRENCH INTERESTS WERE WELL SERVED BY THE FORMER GOVERNMENT AND THE ABRUPT REMOVAL OF DIORI HAS LED TO CONCERN AMONG THE LOCAL FRENCH. THE REALTIVELY MODERATE COMPOSITION OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL, THE DISCIPLINED BEHAVIOR OF THE ARMY AND IMPORTANTLY THE STATEMENT BY LT COL SEYNI THAT HE SAW NO REASON TO QUESTION RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, HAVE HELPED CALM THE FRENCH. NEVERTHELESS THERE ARE FEW AMONG THEM WHO BELIEVE THEY WILL BE BETTER OFF UNDER THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL THAN UNDER THE OLD REGIME.

4. AS SEEN FROM NIAMEY, OFFICIAL FRENCH GOVERNMENT REACTION TO COUP WAS THAT AFTER MAKING CERTAIN OF DIORI'S PHYSICAL WELL-BEING: NEXT ORDER OF BUSINESS WAS TO ESTABLISH CLOSE WORKING RELATIONS WITH NEW GOVERNMENT. FRENCH AMBASSADOR SAID HE IS CAUTIOUSLY CONFIDENTIAL

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OPTIMISTIC THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND NIGER WILL CONTINUE CLOSE AND FRIENDLY ALTHOUGH THERE WILL BE INITIALLY A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF RESERVE AND COOLNESS SHOWN IN PUBLIC.

5. IT MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST TO KNOW MEANS EMPLOYED BY GOF TO ASCERTAIN OFFICIALLY CONDITION OF DIORI AND REGISTER CONCERN FOR HIS SAFETY. DESPITE PERSONAL

ASSURANCES FROM LT COL SEYNI AND MAJOR SANI TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR THAT DIORI WAS SAFE AND UNHARMED, GOF INSISTED ON SENDING SPECIAL ENVOY IN MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO VERIFY HIS CONDITION AND TO CARRY MESSAGE ASKING THAT DIORI BE TREATED HUMANELY. LT COL SEYNI HOWEVER REFUSED TO ALLOW AIRCRAFT TO LAND AT NIAMEY AND SO IT LANDED AT OUAGADOUGOU. SEYNI FINALLY AGREED TO ALLOW ENVOY TO COME TO NIAMEY BUT INSISTED THAT ENVOY BE FLOWN HERE BY NIGER AIR FORCE PLANE. LATE AFTERNOON APRIL 17, ENVOY WAS FINALLY RECEIVED FOR FIVE MINUTES BY LT COL SEYNI.

6. MADAME DIORI WAS BURIED YESTERDAY IN HER VILLAGE NEAR DOGONDOUTCHI. MOST PLAUSIBLE VERSION OF HER DEMISE IS THAT SHE WAS GUNNED DOWN AFTER SHE SHOT AT SOLDIERS ATTEMPTING TO ARREST HER. ALTHOUGH NEW GOVERNMENT HAS CONFIRMED DEATHS OF ONLY TWO ARMY MEMBERS KILLED IN ATTACK ON PALACE, IT SEEMS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT AT LEAST A DOZEN PRESIDENTIAL GUARDS AND SEVERAL CIVILIANS WORKING AT PALACE WERE ALSO KILLED DURING ATTACK/ WE HAVE HEARD THAT A FEW CIVILIANS WERE KILLED ELSEWHERE IN CITY WHEN THEY IGNORED ROADBLOCKS AND THAT SEVERAL GUARDS AT HOMES OF TOP GOVERNMENT AND PARTY OFFICIALS WERE KILLED WHEN THEY TRIED TO PREVENT ARRESTS BY SOLDIERS.

7. OFFICIAL SPELLING OF PRESIDENT OF SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL IS LT COL SEYNI KOUNTCHE. WHETHER HE SHOULD BE REFERRED TO AS SEYNI OR KOUNTCHE IS NOT CERTAIN SINCE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WITHIN PROTOCOL, MIN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MIN INFORMATION. BOTH FORMS ARE ACCEPTABLE UNTIL HE HIMSELF INDICATES HIS PREFERENCE.  
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## Message Attributes

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